THE DEPORTATION OF THE NORFOLK ISLANDERS TO THE DERWENT IN 1808.

By James Backhouse Walker.

I.—The Settlement of Norfolk Island.

The laborious and valuable researches made in the English State Record Office by the veteran historian, Mr. James Bonwick, have a great interest for Australians, and mark a new departure for the historian of the Australian Colonies.

The Government of New South Wales has shown its sense of the value of the documents which Mr. Bonwick has discovered by printing them *in extenso*.* Our own Government, equally mindful of the importance of these records for the elucidation of our early history, has with a wise forethought availed itself of Mr. Bonwick's special knowledge to secure copies of the papers relating to the settlement and earliest history of Tasmania. Of this period no contemporary records have been preserved in our local archives; our knowledge of those early times has hitherto been derived merely from vague and inaccurate tradition. The material supplied by Mr. Bonwick, and placed at my disposal by the courtesy of the Government, has enabled me to lay before the Royal Society the first authentic story of the planting of Tasmania and of the motives which led to it.

In former papers which I have had the honour of reading before the Society we have seen how the occupation of our island came about. It was merely one episode of the long life-and-death struggle which England waged with France under the first Napoleon. It was due to the dread of possible injury to England from the sudden intrusion of a hostile French settlement in such close proximity to the young English colony at Port Jackson. The first puny occupation by Bowen at Risdon in September, 1803; the expedition of Collins to Port Phillip and its transfer to Hobart in February, 1804; the occupation of the Tamar by Paterson in August of the same year, and the consequent settlement of northern Tasmania, were all parts of the far-seeing and persistent policy by which the great English statesmen of that day did much to ensure the fall of Napoleon's power, and to give to England her world-wide dominion.

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*Up to this date (1895) five volumes have appeared, viz., Historical Records of New South Wales, 1762-1795 (3 vols.); History of New South Wales from the Records, 1783-1789 (2 vols.)

The next chapter in our colonial history to which I ask your attention, demands for our comprehension of its significance that we should leave these high questions of statesmanship, and turn our view for a time to a small and solitary island, separated from us by more than a thousand miles of ocean, the fortunes of which have, nevertheless, been strangely interwoven with those of our own colony.

Situated in seas where perpetual summer reigns, endowed with great natural beauty, rich in the fruits of the tropics, few spots in our modern world have had a history so strange, so various, so horrible, and yet so romantic, as that of Norfolk Island. At the present time it is the secure retreat of an easy and indolent race, who are yet the descendants of the actors in one of the most noted and picturesque piratical deeds recorded in English annals. It is, moreover, the peaceful headquarters of a Christian mission to the savage islands where the saintly Patteson laid down his life. It is most familiar to us as a synonym for cruelty and crime, a reminiscence of the days when the distant island formed a dependency and a part of the then penal settlement of Van Diemen's Land. To the majority this, which is within the memory of many still living amongst us, is the only known link between our colony and it—perhaps the only known fact respecting its earlier history. Comparatively few are aware that—with the single exception of Sydney—Norfolk Island is the oldest English colony in the South Seas. Perhaps still fewer know that to that same far-off island, so familiar to us in later days under another aspect, Tasmania was indebted for a large proportion of her earliest colonists. To this historical fact the familiar names of New Norfolk in the south, and Norfolk Plains in the north of this colony remain a perpetual but unappreciated memorial.

The history of Norfolk Island and its early colonists thus becomes an essential part of the history of Tasmania. The history of its colonisation and settlement can be gathered from scattered references in the works of Collins and other contemporary writers, but Mr. Bonwick's researches in the Record Office enable me to lay before the Royal Society the first authentic story of the evacuation of the island and the transference of all its free settlers to the Derwent in 1808.

And first as to its discovery. The first voyage of Captain Cook, lasting from 1768 to 1771, was that in which he did his most memorable work. The immediate object of the expedition was the observation of the Transit of Venus at Tahiti in the South Seas. But the voyage had more important results than astronomical observations, valuable as these were to science. In his little north-country collier of 370 tons, the *Endeavour*, Cook rediscovered and examined the islands of New Zealand, and then steering for the as yet unknown coast of New Holland,

anchored in Botany Bay (28th April, 1770), and examined the whole eastern coast, to which he gave the name of New South Wales. In two short years of this memorable voyage our great navigator had practically added the possessions of Australia and New Zealand to the English Crown, a work possibly only second in its importance in the world's history to the discovery of America.

Though Cook's first voyage was beyond question the most fruitful in results, yet the more leisurely explorations of his second voyage in the *Resolution* and the *Adventure*, extending from 1772 to 1775, are fuller of interest to the reader. Cook himself states the object of this second expedition to have been "to complete the discovery of the southern hemisphere." His first voyage had proved that if, as the geographers believed, any great southern continent did exist, it must lie far to the south of the latitude of New Holland. In three successive years during this second voyage Cook sailed to the far south, making three unsuccessful attempts to penetrate the frozen sea, and finally demonstrating that the dream of centuries had no foundation, and that there was no *Terra Australis Incognita* outside the limits of the circumpolar ice. In the intervals between his attempts on the Antarctic Ocean, Cook employed the winter months in making further explorations in the Pacific, and his journals contain most fascinating descriptions of this first view of the islands of the south and of their inhabitants in their original wild condition. In 1774 he employed his time in cruising among the Pacific Islands, beginning at Easter Island, with its gigantic stone figures, mysterious relics of a forgotten civilisation. Thence, after a stay at his beloved Tahiti, he worked westward among the islands to New Caledonia on his way to make his third and final attempt on the Antarctic Circle.

On the 10th October, 1774, as the *Resolution* was slowly ploughing her way from New Caledonia towards New Zealand, land was discovered bearing S.W. It was found to be an island of good height, five leagues in circumference. The island was bounded by rocky cliffs on nearly every side, with 18 to 20 fathoms water close to the shore. Cook says, "I named it Norfolk Isle, in honour of the noble family of Howard."

The boats were launched, and the weather being exceptionally favourable, the captain landed without difficulty behind some large rocks on the north-east side, near what was afterwards known as the Cascades. Along the shore was a belt of thick scrub, and beyond this a dense forest of a sort of spruce pine, the trees as thick as two men could fathom, and exceedingly straight and tall. The soil was rich and deep, and the Captain found many trees and plants common to New Zealand, particularly the flax-plant, growing near the sea most

luxuriantly, and much finer than he had seen it in New Zealand. The woods abounded with pigeons, parrots, parrakeets, hawks, and many New Zealand birds. The island was uninhabited. The party from the *Resolution* may have been the first human beings to tread its tangled forests, though it is possible that at isolated periods previously Maori canoes had been driven by heavy south-east storms from the coast of New Zealand, and that shipwrecked Maoris had maintained an existence on the island for years; for in the early days of the settlement two canoes were found on the beaches, and it is said stone adzes resembling those in use in New Zealand were turned up when the land was being broken up for cultivation. Cook gave but a few hours to the examination of the island, and on the following day sailed away for New Zealand. On the publication of his book, his description, brief as it was, of the capabilities of Norfolk Island, of its rich soil, its dense pine forests, and profuse growth of New Zealand flax, attracted attention to it as a desirable possession. Consequently, when the Government in the year 1787 resolved on establishing a penal settlement at Botany Bay, it was determined to occupy this promising island as a dependency of the principal colony. In the Royal instructions to Governor Phillip the following passage occurs :—"Norfolk Island . . . . being represented as a spot which may hereafter become useful, you are, as soon as circumstances admit of it, to send a small establishment thither to secure the same to us, and prevent it being occupied by the subjects of any other European power." The instructions also contain directions to the Governor as to the cultivation of the flax-plant, and its use in manufacturing clothing for the convicts and also for maritime purposes.

Little more than a week after Governor Phillip had landed on the site of Sydney (6th February, 1788), Philip Gidley King, then a young lieutenant on board H.M.S. *Sirius*, received his commission as Superintendent and Commandant of the settlement of Norfolk Island, with orders to take a small party of people and some live stock to this distant isle, which was intended to serve as a place of seclusion for troublesome characters, and as a possible succour for the main settlement in case of famine. The party placed under King's charge was very similar to that which 15 years later he himself despatched under Lieut. Bowen to occupy Risdon on the Derwent. It consisted of an officer and surgeon from H.M.S. *Sirius*, four seamen and two marines from the same vessel, with nine male and six female convicts. They sailed from Port Jackson in the armed tender *Supply*, and were 14 days before, on 29th February, they came in sight of their destination. For days they cruised round the island searching in vain for a harbour or even a landing-place, sometimes in the ship, sometimes

exploring the shores in a boat, but everywhere baffled by the inaccessible cliffs or the thundering surf of the ocean swell on the rocky beaches. At last, after five days' search, and when they had almost despaired of success, they found a beach in a bay on the south side of the island, protected by a long reef extending parallel with the shore and about 150 yards distant from it. At the end of the reef was an opening, little more than sufficient to allow two boats to pass each other, which gave access to the smooth water inside. Here King got his little party landed with their stores, and soon had a small patch of ground cleared and tents pitched. Having settled his colony, King now proceeded to explore his new domain. He describes the island as six miles long and four broad, and estimated it to contain about 11,000 acres. The ground was everywhere covered with an almost impervious forest, through which he forced his way with great difficulty. The principal tree was the pine, which grew everywhere. These great trees were often 140 to 200 feet high, 30 feet round at the base, and 80 feet to the first branch. The roots sometimes ran two feet above the ground twisted in all directions. In this forest grew a sort of supplejack as thick as a man's leg, hanging in festoons from tree to tree, and forming a network which was well nigh impenetrable. From the highest point of the island, 1200 feet above the sea-level, which he named Mount Pitt, he had a view of a continuous forest without a break, for in its natural state there was not a yard square of clear ground on the whole island. The soil was deep and rich, but not a blade of grass grew anywhere. Pigeons and parrots were in great numbers; the pigeons so tame that they could be knocked over with a stick. These explorations were made with great difficulty, and the explorers often returned with their clothes torn to shreds. To conquer the virgin forest King had only 12 men, and one of these was an old man of 72, another a boy of 15. Small as the company was it was a difficult one to manage. Before a month passed the boy, having been caught stealing rum, was punished with 100 lashes, which King in his diary remarks he hoped would have a good effect; and later on we hear of a woman being punished in a similar way. To add to the Commandant's troubles all his people were ill with scurvy from their salt diet, and his first attention was given to obtaining fresh provisions. At first they got turtle, but these were soon scared away. The fish supply was precarious, as fishing was only possible in calm weather. Their chief resource was the pigeons, and the birds which abounded on Mount Pitt gave them many a good meal. A few banana trees were found growing not far from the settlement, but for vegetables they were chiefly dependent on nikau-palm, the crown of which furnished a good vegetable not unlike a cabbage.

Under these circumstances the progress of the settlement was very slow, but gradually, as the little colony was reinforced by fresh drafts from Sydney, ground was cleared and brought under cultivation, huts and store-houses were erected, and a weatherboard cottage, 24 feet by 12 feet, was built for a Government house. In January, 1790, two years after his first landing, there were on the island 79 male and 33 female convicts and 32 free settlers; in all 144 souls. King's administration of Norfolk Island lasted (with one interval) from February, 1788, to September, 1796, a period of eight and a half years. He has left a diary of those days extending over many quarto pages of print. It is dreary reading, being a chronicle of petty crimes and rough punishments, of crops destroyed by blight or grub, of disorders, conspiracies, and mutinies among the prisoners, of discontent among the settlers whether free or emancipated. King ruled this turbulent community like a sailor, with a mixture of rough severity and good-natured lenity, dealing out barbaric punishment to offenders, and eqally barbaric indulgences as a reward for improved behaviour.

The early attempts at agriculture were not very successful. When his first little patch of wheat came up the south-west wind blighted it and turned it black; the next crop (and many a one after that) was nipped off by a small black caterpillar which came in thousands; others were destroyed by a great worm; much was eaten by parrakeets; and even when the wheat was harvested it was attacked by the weevil and rendered useless. The rats—the only animals on the island—ate his Indian corn, in spite of traps and pounded glass mixed with oatmeal which slew them in hundreds. The most successful crops were potatoes and vegetables. Nor was he more successful with his live stock than with his agriculture. There being no grass on the island the stock had to be fed on herbs and plants. The sheep succumbed and died, partly from starvation, partly from scab. The pigs suffered greatly from poisonous herbs, and he had great difficulty in feeding them until he found that a tall palm or fern, growing 80 feet high, had a soft core tasting like a bad turnip, on which the hogs throve splendidly.

In spite of all these misfortunes, however, and in spite of the calamity of a hurricane of wind and rain from the south-east which laid waste and nearly destroyed the camp and the plantations, the little settlement struggled ahead.

In January, 1790, the Commandant records with pride that he had 30 acres of land in cultivation and his free settlers 18 acres. He had in store 300 bushels of wheat and 140 bushels of Indian corn.

While King was thus rejoicing in the progress of his little colony, he little thought of the troubles which were impending,

and which were destined to make the year 1790 a sad and memorable year for the Norfolk Islanders.

To understand the position of affairs we must turn for a moment to the principal settlement at Port Jackson. The two years' supply of provisions which the First Fleet had brought out was now nearly exhausted, and every one at Port Jackson was in daily and anxious expectation of the arrival of ships from England with a fresh supply. In February only four months' provisions, calculated at half allowance, remained in store. It was impossible to say when relief might arrive, and the prospect of starvation began to stare them in the face.

In this emergency Governor Phillip resolved to divide the settlement, and send a large body of convicts and soldiers to Norfolk Island. The Commandant had constantly written in such high terms of the rich soil of the island that it seemed a garden of fertility in comparison with New South Wales, and the Governor thought it would easily support a larger population, and thus relieve the distress of those left in the principal colony. Accordingly, Captain Hunter was ordered to prepare H.M.S. *Sirius* for sea, and embark 186 convicts and a company of marines, while the armed tender *Supply* was to accompany her with 20 convicts and another company of marines. This would make an almost equal division of the people between the island and the main settlement at Port Jackson. Major Ross, the Lieut.-Governor, was to be placed in command of the dependency in place of Lieut. King, who had obtained leave to visit England. A proper proportion of the remaining provisions and stores were put on board, and the ships sailed for Norfolk Island on the 6th March, 1790. A week's sail brought them to the island, and not being able to land in Sydney Bay on account of the surf, they ran round to Cascade Bay on the north side, and in two days contrived to land the people, 270 in all. Before they could land the stores a storm came on and the ships were driven out of sight of land. It was four days before the *Sirius* could make the island again. The *Supply* was already in Sydney Bay, and the signal was flying that the landing was safe. Captain Hunter therefore stood in, loaded the boats with provisions and sent them in to the landing-place within the reef. Meanwhile, as the *Sirius* was settling fast to leeward, Hunter made sail to get her out of the bay, but could not weather the rocks off Point Ross on the western side. The ship twice missed stays and then slowly drifted stern first towards the reef opposite the settlement, and struck. The masts were instantly cut away so that she might lift on to the reef, as she was in danger of going to pieces from the force of the seas that struck her. This was 11 A.M. All the provisions that could be reached were immediately got on deck and secured. This accomplished, a line was floated over the

reef with an empty cask, and a hawser hauled on shore and made fast to a tree. At 5 o'clock the surgeon's mate was hauled ashore through the surf on a traveller fastened to the hawser, and by dark Captain Hunter and most of the seamen were landed, having been dragged through a heavy surf, many being much bruised. The captain was so exhausted that he was nearly drowned. The rest of the crew got ashore next day.

The situation of the settlement was extremely critical. There were now on the island 506 souls on half allowance of provisions, which would last a very short time unless the stores could be saved from the *Sirius*. Lieut.-Governor Ross therefore assembled the officers, and it was resolved that, as under the ordinary law there was no power to punish serious offences on the spot, it was absolutely necessary for the general safety to establish martial law. Further, that all provisions, public and private, should be thrown into a common stock in the storehouse, and put under the charge of three persons, viz., Captain Hunter, a person appointed by the Governor, and a third person to be named by the convicts. On the fifth day after the wreck, and before any of the provisions had been saved from the *Sirius*, the *Supply* sailed for Sydney, with Lieut. King and part of the crew of the *Sirius*, to carry the disastrous news to Port Jackson, where it created fresh consternation and deepened the prevailing gloom; the more so from the impossibility of sending relief to the unfortunate Norfolk Islanders.

Fortunately, after the *Supply* left they were able to get out of the wreck a large part of the provisions, though much was lost or spoiled. For some weeks Lieut.-Governor Ross, Captain Hunter, and the people shut up in the lonely isle entertained a glimmering hope that they might see the *Supply* return with the comfortable news of arrivals from England. Long and anxiously they scanned the sea, and when hope failed and they had come to the reluctant conclusion that Governor Phillip could not relieve them, but had been obliged to send Lieut. Ball on more pressing service, their situation began to wear a very alarming aspect.

The weekly allowance of food was now still further reduced, and Captain Hunter records in his journal his apprehension that before long many of the convicts, who often ate at one meal the whole week's allowance, would be dead from starvation, or executed for depredations. This gloomy anticipation would doubtless have been realised but for an unexpected resource which was discovered.

In the month of April the people who were searching the island for food found that Mount Pitt was crowded with birds. These sea-birds were away all day in search of food, but as soon as dark came on they hovered in vast flocks over the

breeding-ground, which was hollowed by innumerable burrows. The seamen, marines, and convicts went out to Mount Pitt every evening, arriving soon after dark. They lighted small fires to attract the birds, which alighted faster than the people could knock them down. After killing 2000 to 3000 birds every night there was no sensible diminution in their numbers at the end of May. The people called the bird "Pittites;" Phillip in his voyage gives it the name of the Norfolk Island Petrel. It is known to us in Tasmania as the Mutton Bird.

Captain Hunter in his journal calls it the *Bird of Providence*. Such it undoubtedly was to the Norfolk Islanders, who, but for its timely and wholly unexpected arrival, must have perished in numbers from starvation. It is true that the sea abounded in fish, and the neighbouring islets (Phillip Island and Nepean Island) swarmed with countless multitudes of sea fowl, but they were unattainable. For a month together the surf ran so high that not more than once or twice during that time was it possible to launch a boat, and even then the fishing was often unsuccessful, while the islands that the sea-birds frequented were usually inaccessible on account of the tremendous surf.

Towards the end of July the birds on Mount Pitt began to get scarce. As only 10 or 12 days' salt provisions at short allowance were now left, the Lieut.-Governor reduced the ration to three lbs. flour or maize meal and one pint of rice per week. The people were so reduced by want of food that hardly any work could be done, and it was with great difficulty that the little crops could be got in.

On the 4th August, while in this deplorable state, with famine staring them in the face, one of the sailors came running into the settlement, crying out—"A ship! a ship!" Men, women, and children rushed out to welcome her, and Captain Hunter and many of the people hurried across to the north of the island to communicate with her; but when they arrived in sight of her, in spite of their signals, she stood off before the wind and sailed away. Hunter, in his journal published some years later, speaks of their bitter disappointment and indignation at the want of humanity in the captain who, although he might have nothing for them, might at least have informed them of the near approach of relief.

From the appearance of the ship the people were convinced that relief was not far distant, and three days later two ships hove in sight. They proved to be the *Justinian* and *Surprise*, from Port Jackson, with provisions and 200 convicts. The mystery of the non-arrival of supplies from England was now cleared up. The *Guardian*, Captain Riou, had sailed from Plymouth for Sydney with provisions in August, 1789, but she had been wrecked at the Cape, and it was not until the arrival

at Port Jackson of the Second Fleet in June, 1790, that the people felt the danger of starvation to be past.

The relief at last sent to the islanders had with unacccountable want of consideration been delayed two months after the arrival of the fleet, and it arrived only just in time. The mutton birds had deserted the island, the fish also had failed them entirely, and a delay of another six weeks would have meant death by starvation for the greater part of the inhabitants.

Captain Hunter did not get away from the island, which was associated with so much suffering and anxiety to him, until February, 1791. He considered its capabilities much overrated, for—while he admits the richness of the soil—the crops were liable to destruction by blight, grub, caterpillar, and other plagues. The timber of which so much had been expected was very inferior. Instead of being able to support 2000 people as Governor Phillip expected, he thought 500 too many, and these should be such as had forfeited all hope of seeing their native country again, and would know that their existence depended on their industry. He recommended the Government to remove the establishment to Port Dalrymple, as its only use could be to supply South Sea whalers with fresh meat and vegetables; though he admitted that as a place for incorrigible criminals the colony had this advantage—that escape was impossible. Of the island he says, "It is a dreadful place, almost inaccessible with any wind."

Notwithstanding the unfavourable opinion of Captain Hunter and others, Governor Phillip continued to send fresh batches of convicts and small settlers, and when Lieut.-Governor Ross gave up the command to King, on the return of the latter from England in September, 1791, the population had increased to over 800 souls.

King had now the rank of Lieut.-Governor of Norfolk Island. He had founded the colony, and took the most sanguine view of its capabilities, and of the practicability of making it prosperous and self-supporting. Besides getting a large area of land under cultivation by the labour of the prisoners, he encouraged these whose time had expired to take up small allotments for growing vegetables and grain. A number of soldiers and sailors were also induced by the offer of grants of land up to 60 acres to become agricultural settlers.

The greatest obstacle to the progress of the settlement lay in the character of the people. King says of the prisoners that while some were well behaved the bulk of them were miserable wretches. Collins, in his account of New South Wales, gives a deplorable picture of the disorder and crime which were rampant at Port Jackson, and as the selection for Norfolk Island consisted of the worst and the doubly-convicted, the condition of affairs in the island was not likely to be better

than in Sydney. The settlers were mostly soldiers and sailors and others who had little or no knowledge of agriculture, and were full of grievances and complaints. Still the colony increased in population and production. At the end of 1793 there were 1008 souls on the island. The settlers had become a considerable body, and they had command of a plentiful supply of labour in the expiree prisoners who had hired themselves out to farm-work. The Government took into store all grain grown by the settlers at a fixed price per bushel. This so stimulated production that in the year ending May, 1794, there were grown 34,000 bushels of maize and wheat. The settlers were all prosperous, and the Lieut.-Governor was able to offer to send, if required, 20,000 bushels to Sydney for commissariat use. The supply was now so large that the Governor was obliged to refuse to purchase grain which he could make no use of, and the settlers found themselves without a market. Many gave up their farms; many left the island; others turned their attention to raising hogs, which had multiplied exceedingly. In 1795 King could offer the Sydney commissariat 40 tons of cured pork which had been salted on the island.

It will be remembered that the New Zealand flax plant was most plentiful at Norfolk Island. Lieut.-Governor King was very anxious to develop the manufacture of the fibre into cordage and canvas. Many attempts were made but with small success, as no proper method of dressing the fibre could be discovered. King's method of grappling with this difficulty is sufficiently characteristic of the times. He offered to Captain Bunker, of the whaler *William and Ann*, £100 to kidnap two natives of New Zealand and bring them to Norfolk Island as instructors in the art of flax-dressing. Captain Bunker did not succeed in earning the money. King seems to have made his views known to the Admiralty, for when the *Dædalus* storeship was employed to carry provisions to the Sandwich Islands for Vancouver's discovery ships, Lieut. Hanson who commanded her was directed to touch at New Zealand on his way back to Sydney and try to supply King's wants. The *Dædalus* accordingly touched at New Zealand, about Doubtless Bay, and Lieut. Hanson having enticed on board his ship two Maoris, named Tuki and Uru, at once made sail and carried them away to Governor King. The Maoris, who had been frantic with grief when they found themselves entrapped, were very sullen on their arrival at Norfolk Island, and absolutely refused any information respecting the flax. King says: "The apprehension of being obliged to work at it was afterwards found to have been a principal reason for their not complying so readily as was expected. By kind treatment, however, and indulgence in

their own inclinations, they soon began to be more sociable. They were then given to understand the situation and short distance of New Zealand from Norfolk Island, and were assured that as soon as they had taught our women to work the flax they should be sent home again. On this promise they readily consented to give all the information they possessed, and which turned out to be very little. This operation was found to be among them the peculiar province of the women; and as Uru was a warrior and Tuki a priest, they gave the Governor to understand that the dressing of flax never made any part of their studies." Whatever may be thought of the means King employed to obtain the services of Uru and Tuki, it must be acknowledged that he fulfilled his promises to them very handsomely. He decided to accompany them to New Zealand, and embarked with them and a guard of soldiers on board the *Britannia* to take them back to their homes. This was safely accomplished, and the Governor and his Maori friends parted with great expressions of mutual regard.

The instruction given by Tuki and Uru, meagre as it was, was sufficient to enable a few hands with very primitive appliances to manufacture 30 yards of coarse canvas in a week, and the Lieut.-Governor stuck pluckily to his manufactory, maintaining to the last that it was a valuable industry, and could easily give employment to 500 hands.

On the 25th October, 1796, Lieut.-Governor King gave up the government, which he had held, with a short interval, for nearly nine years, and proceeded by the *Britannia* to England. Shortly afterwards he received the appointment of Governor of New South Wales; in which capacity, in 1803, he despatched Lieutenant Bowen to establish the first settlement in Tasmania.

On leaving Norfolk Island he wrote an account of the condition of the settlement, which is printed in Collins' "New South Wales"; the population was 887, and of these only 198 were convicts. He says that 1528 acres had been cleared. Besides huts and cottages a Government-house, storehouses, and military barracks had been built. A water-mill had been erected at the Cascades, and this and two windmills ground the corn which each man had formerly to grind for himself. There were two schools on the island.

Of the fertility of the land he spoke highly; the principal products were maize, wheat, potatoes, and vegetables. The yield of wheat averaged 18 bushels per acre. Maize gave two crops a year, averaging 45 bushels per acre, and often reaching as much as 70 to 80 bushels. He calculated that if the whole of the arable land was put under cultivation it would produce 225,000 bushels of grain, or even 450,000 if fully cultivated. There was little live stock, a few cattle and sheep, a number of goats, and fully 5000 swine. The swine might be a great source

of revenue; up to that time 500,000 lbs. of pork had been used or exported.

With King's departure the settlement began to retrograde; but the story of its gradual decline and the final deportation of its settlers to Tasmania must be left to be dealt with in a future paper.

II.—The Deportation to the Derwent.

In the last paper which I read before the Society I sketched the strange story of the first planting of a European colony in an island of the South Sea,—the settlement of Norfolk Island by Lieut. King in the year 1788, and its fortunes during a period of eight years. I now propose to trace the history of its failure and abandonment, and the transfer of its settlers to our own island.

From his first landing in February, 1788, Lieut. King had formed the most sanguine expectations of the future. He was charmed with the beauty of the island. With such a genial climate and such a fertile soil it should grow into one of the most flourishing and valuable of colonies. From this view he never wavered. To secure this result he struggled bravely and pertinaciously to overcome the difficulties of nature and the perversity of man. Nature met him on the threshold with a well nigh inaccessible coast and a dense and tangled forest, and fought him with hurricanes and blighting winds, with drought and caterpillars, which marred his labour. But to rule and organise the unpromising human material with which he had to work, and to turn it to account in the face of laziness and disaffection, was a more trying task than to conquer nature. Still, during those eight or nine years he had fought his way through difficulty and not a few disasters to the attainment of a very fair success. When in September, 1796, he resigned his government, he left with the feeling that the settlement to which he had given some of the best years of his life had overcome its first difficulties, and was firmly established with a bright outlook for the future. The little island had a population of nearly 900 people, who dotted its surface with clearings and cottages. More than a third of its area (5247 acres) was occupied, and 1528 acres cleared and cultivated. The production of grain and pork not only sufficed for the wants of the inhabitants, but left a large surplus for exportation to New South Wales. And yet the resources of the island were, in his view, only beginning to be developed. Instead of a population of 1000, he considered it could easily support more than twice that number, and could more than quadruple its products. By ordinary methods it would be easy to produce a quarter of a million of bushels of grain; careful husbandry might even double that quantity. In King's opinion it might become a

paradise for small landholders, who would be enriched by the labour of those convicts whom it was desirable to isolate from the main settlement. The settlers would consist of soldiers, sailors, and the better class of expiree prisoners, while forced labour would clear and cultivate their lands and build their houses. New South Wales would benefit by the removal of the worst and the most turbulent, and these would be easily controlled in an isolated dependency by a small military force, and under strict discipline would be transformed into a means of wealth to the community instead of being a menace to its order. The mistake of the New South Wales settlement had been that it had been formed exclusively of convicts, but in Norfolk Island the true solution of the transportation question would be found. It would be a community of free settlers, to which the convicts would supply labour. It would be not only a self-supporting but a profitable penal colony.

When Captain King left Norfolk Island for England in the *Britannia* in 1796, he handed over the command to the principal military officer, Captain Townson, of the New South Wales Corps. Now that the island produced grain and meat enough to feed its inhabitants, its most pressing want was a vessel expressly appropriated to its service, and always ready for communication with Sydney. Vessels were so few at Port Jackson that none could be spared for the exclusive use of Norfolk Island. Captain Townson therefore determined to try what the island could do for itself. The indigenous pine provided timber in plenty, but appliances were few, and the want of a harbour presented almost insuperable obstacles to ship-building. However, after some months' labour, there stood upon the beach before the settlement a little craft of 25 tons, built of Norfolk Island pine, completely rigged and equipped for sea. An ingenious man on the island made a quadrant with which to navigate her. She was launched from the shore, and had to go on her voyage to Sydney without any further preparation. Probably she was strained in launching, for she proved to be very leaky. With the aid of two pumps, however, the little crew managed to keep the water under, and she safely reached Port Jackson (15 June, 1798) with the Commandant's despatches to Governor Hunter. This vessel, the first and the only one built at Norfolk Island, was named the *Norfolk*, and though little more than a decked longboat, she was destined to do good service and attain a certain celebrity. Captain Townson and the Norfolk Islanders were not allowed to benefit by the vessel which they had built with so much difficulty. When she reached Port Jackson Flinders and Bass were burning with anxiety to solve once for all the vexed problem of Bass Strait and the insularity of Van Diemen's Land. They persuaded Governor Hunter to fit

up the *Norfolk* for a voyage of discovery, and four months after her arrival at Sydney she sailed with those two adventurous explorers, passed through Bass Strait, and accomplished the first circumnavigation of Van Diemen's Land.

In April, 1800, Captain King returned to New South Wales from England, but he did not go back to his old government at Norfolk Island. He had brought with him His Majesty's Commission as Lieutenant-Governor of New South Wales, and when Governor Hunter left Sydney for England in September, 1800, King succeeded him in the government of the principal Colony.

Before Governor Hunter's departure, and in accordance with orders from Home, Major Joseph Foveaux, of the New South Wales Corps, was appointed Commandant of Norfolk Island, and assumed the Government in July, 1800. Matters were in a bad way in the island. With the withdrawal of King's zeal and energy improvement had ceased. The population had increased somewhat, but in all other respects the settlement was steadily going back. Governor Hunter, who touched at the island on his way to England in H.M.S. *Buffalo* (October, 1800) to land some mutinous Irish prisoners, gave a deplorable account of its condition. Its appearance was most unpromising. All the buildings were in a state of rapid decay, and but few signs of industry were visible. The people were idle and refractory, the crops were mostly a failure. All they could supply to the *Buffalo* was a few hogs and some vegetables.

The sanguine hopes of King were doomed to disappointment. The island had been at first occupied chiefly with a view to developing the manufacture of New Zealand flax. This had proved a complete failure. Much had been expected from the pine forests ; but the timber was found to be unfit for ship-building and too brittle for spars, even if it had been possible for ships to lie there and take it in. The soil was fertile, it is true, but from the uncertainty of the climate and the many plagues—drought, blight, and caterpillars—the crops oftener than not yielded but a poor return. The project of settling pensioners and expirees had proved abortive. The soldiers and sailors were mostly too ignorant of farming to succeed, and the inveterate idleness of the bulk of the settlers of another class had been a still more insuperable obstacle to their prosperity. Moreover, they were discontented and disaffected, and laid the blame of all their misfortunes upon the Government.

Governor Hunter was not alone in his opinion. Collins, who had ample opportunities of forming a correct judgment, speaks in his work on New South Wales of Norfolk Island as the place for transporting offenders who had been again

convicted in New South Wales, and that this was more dreaded than the first transportation. He thought that for this purpose it might be continued as an alternative for the gallows, but as a settlement the expense was quite disproportionate to any advantage to be derived from it. From the reports of Flinders and Bass on the climate, soil, and harbours of Van Diemen's Land, he thought that territory would be found much more profitable than this parched and inaccessible island.

Such was the condition of affairs when Major Foveaux took over the command in July, 1800. Foveaux was not the man to cope with the situation, or to infuse a spirit of order into a disorganised society. As if with the intention of making his task more difficult Governor King added a new trouble by banishing to the island a number of the most turbulent of the Irishmen who had been exiled to New South Wales for their participation in the rising of 1798: they had given much trouble at Port Jackson through their mutinous conduct, and it was thought that by banishing the most turbulent to the distant settlement they could be kept under better restraint. But in Norfolk Island society was even more anarchical than in the principal colony, and there was abundant opportunity for plotting. In December, 1800, a conspiracy was discovered among the Irish, the object being to overpower the officers, seize the island, and escape. As the Irish numbered only 36 men, while there was a force of 100 soldiers and 26 constables, the plot could scarcely have been called formidable. But, if Foveaux was unable to preserve order, he could at least take summary and barbarous vengeance. He received full information of the plot on a Saturday evening. On the Sunday morning the people went to church as usual. When service was over all the Irish were ironed and put into gaol. At two o'clock the Commandant had a gallows erected, and two of the ringleaders, John Whollahan and Peter M'Lean, were brought out and forthwith hanged without trial or examination.

In the memoirs of the so-called General Holt we have some graphic sketches of the state of Norfolk Island under Major Foveaux's government in 1804. Joseph Holt was a prominent leader of the United Irishmen during the rising of 1798, and was transported—or to speak more correctly, exiled—to New South Wales as a political prisoner. As a State prisoner Holt was allowed full liberty in the Colony, and being a man of ability and energy attained a fairly comfortable position. At the time of the Castle Hill rising in 1804, however, he came under suspicion, more on account of his antecedents as a rebel leader than from any actual proof of his complicity in the plot. Governor King, however, made up his mind that Holt was a dangerous character, and banished him to Norfolk

Island. There is no doubt that Holt's picture is strongly coloured by his prejudices, and must be taken with large allowances, but the account he gives of the arbitrary cruelty which reigned under Foveaux is too surely corroborated from other sources to be very far from the truth. As a political exile Holt was legally a free man in New South Wales, though subject to certain restrictions. He had not been convicted of any crime when exiled to Norfolk Island, yet immediately on arrival he was clapped into gaol, and by Foveaux's orders was illegally put into the working gang as a convict. At first he refused to work, but, mindful of the absolute power of the Commandant, who was sole judge and jury, he finally submitted. For some three or four months he was kept in the gang, in which the men were subjected to most brutal treatment from the overseers. At length, under the combined effect of severe labour and exposure and insufficient rations Holt broke down, and in consequence of strong representations from Surgeon D'Arcy Wentworth to Foveaux of the illegality of this treatment, he was exempted from further labour and given his liberty. He remained on the island for 15 months longer, until Major Foveaux was succeeded in the command by Captain Piper. Holt describes Norfolk Island in these terms: "The dwelling of devils in human shape, the refuse of Botany Bay, the doubly damned."

In spite of Governor King's partiality for the settlement he had founded, it was becoming evident to the Home Authorities that Norfolk Island was never likely to become a successful Colony, and that it would always continue to be an expensive burden on the Government. Dr. Lang, in his "History of New South Wales," roundly charges King with having, from some interested motive, done his best to discredit the settlement at the Colonial Office. In the absence of any direct proof, and from the general tenor of King's conduct with regard to the changes in the establishment, this charge seems to be wholly without foundation. It is much more probable that the views of such men as Hunter and Collins, with the unsatisfactory reports of the condition of the settlement, and its great expense, prompted the Home Government to decide to reduce the establishment, if not to abandon the island altogether.

At the same time, Governor King's urgent representations of the danger which was impending over the new Colonies from the designs of the French had roused the English Government to take active measures to forestall them. In December, 1802, the Cabinet had decided to form a settlement at Port Phillip, and in the following April Colonel Collins' expedition had been despatched for that purpose.

Still the Government was uneasy; and in June, 1803, Lord Hobart wrote to Governor King that the position of Port

Dalrymple in Bass Strait rendered it particularly necessary, from a political point of view, that an establishment should be placed there, and directed him for that purpose to remove from Norfolk Island a portion of the settlers and the convicts, and send them to Port Dalrymple under the command of Lieut.-Col. Paterson, at the same time recalling Major Foveaux to Sydney. Lord Hobart's despatch did not arrive at Port Jackson until May, 1804, nearly 12 months after it was written. Collins having in the meantime abandoned Port Phillip for the Derwent, the importance of occupying a station in Bass Straits became more urgent, and King at once applied himself to carry out his instructions respecting the settlement of Port Dalrymple, which was eventually accomplished by Paterson settling at George Town in November, 1804.

King did not show the same alacrity in complying with the instructions respecting Norfolk Island. There is little doubt that they were distasteful to him. He contented himself with writing to Foveaux (23 June, 1804) that the establishment was to be reduced, and that towards the end of the year he would send a vessel or vessels to remove any settlers who were inclined to go to the new colony at Port Dalrymple. At the same time he said that he did not wish to force removal on any settlers who were valuable and industrious, and who might be ruined by having to give up their land after the expenditure of so much labour and the endurance of so much hardship. Nor, on the other hand, did he want the useless and idle, who might be only too willing to move. Still, out of the 33 larger landholders there might be some who would be willing to go, and they should be encouraged by the offer of liberal terms. They and their stock would be removed at the public expense, and what was necessarily left behind would be taken by the Government at a valuation. On surrendering their grants they were to have four acres for every acre cultivated at Norfolk Island, and two acres for every acre of waste land. They were to have rations for twelve months for themselves and their households, and be allowed the labour of two convicts for the same period. Of the 180 little occupiers there might be a few who were worthy of encouragement and removal.

On receipt of the Governor's instructions Foveaux assembled the settlers (19th July, 1804), and laid the proposal before them. It was well received, and some 40 at once gave in their names as ready to try their fortunes in Van Diemen's Land. These 40 were free settlers, most of them being mea who had been either in the army or the navy. A considerable proportion held grants of from 30 to 120 acres each. A few had flocks of sheep ; one, George Guest, as many as 600. Amongst those who were strongly recommended by Foveaux as the most industrious and fittest for selection we find the names of

Daniel Stanfield, Abraham Hand, John and Joseph Beresford, George Guest, Wm. Pentony, Joseph Bullock, Edward Fisher, James Morrisby, and James Belbin. The only stipulation they made was that they should be allowed to wait until their crops were ripe, so as to take with them their corn and maize, and not be wholly dependent on rations from the public stores.

But the settlers soon repented of their hasty decision. When the *Integrity* arrived from Sydney a fortnight later (4th August) with further despatches from the Governor, and their contents were communicated to two of the principal inhabitants, out of the 41 who had sent in their names all but 10 withdrew. As the settlers would not move voluntarily, and as King had no instructions to use compulsory measures, the only thing left to do was to reduce the establishment. Foveaux was of opinion that such half measures were a mistake, and that the choice lay between continuing the colony on its existing footing or abandoning it altogether. To cut down salaries and discharge officers would work great injustice to men who had spent considerable sums in building houses and making improvements. They must be compensated, and the saving effected would be minute. But, indeed, any material reduction would be impossible. Courts of justice must be kept up, and there must be a sufficient number of officers to make a jury. Governor King proposed sending a vessel annually with officers to make a court, the vessel to bring back salt pork for the supply of Port Jackson. But a court once a year was quite insufficient, and their experience of salting pork was not encouraging. The pork was often so badly cured that it was useless for food, and the supply of swine could not be depended on. Corn was absolutely necessary both for their rearing and fattening, and the frequent scarcity of corn caused great mortality. Indeed, the expectations formed of the island were never likely to be realised. In 1801 there had been a famine owing to the scarcity of grain and pork, and the inhabitants had been dependent for food on fish. In 1802 the crops were better, but since then they had either failed generally, or had been so poor as hardly to reward the settlers' labour. But for the large yield from Government land in 1802, large supplies would have been required from Port Jackson. As it was, they had been obliged to get flour from Sydney, and even then could only allow a reduced ration. Many of the settlers were in great distress, and if the crops failed again—as indeed was afterwards the case—they would be in absolute want.

Yet in spite of all these disadvantages many of the settlers, especially those who had come over with the first settlement, showed a great reluctance to move. They were attached to their homes, and did not care again to face the difficulties and

privations which they would have to encounter in a new settlement before they could get round them even such comforts for their families as they had at Norfolk Island. If they knew that the Government meant to abandon the settlement altogether, probably they would be willing to remove. One of the greatest obstacles was their debts. But perhaps the offer of greater inducements might overcome their reluctance, and eventually they would all benefit by the change.

Governor King had no authority to abandon the settlement, and was probably only too pleased that the settlers whom he had planted showed such an attachment to his favourite island, or at least so much reluctance to leave it. It only remained for him to make such reductions in the establishment as were possible. Some of the civil officers were discharged and others transferred to Port Dalrymple, the military guard was reduced by one-half, and most of the convicts were withdrawn, some being removed to Port Dalrymple and the remainder to Port Jackson. With the few small vessels available for the service, the difficulty of approach to the island, and the storms which on more than one occasion disabled the badly found and unseaworthy ships, the removal of even a small part of the people was a tedious business, extending over many months. By the end of 1805 about 250 people had been removed, leaving more than 700 still on the Island. The stores were for the most part transferred to Port Dalrymple and the Derwent. A large quantity of the salt pork sent to the latter settlement was condemned as unfit for human food.

In accordance with Lord Hobart's instructions, Major Foveaux resigned his charge on 12th February, 1805, when the reductions began. Captain John Piper, the senior military officer, took his place as Commandant. If Holt is to be trusted, Captain Piper's rule presented a favourable contrast to that of Foveaux, both in the humanity and consideration he showed to those under him and in his general conduct. To Piper was left the troublesome and unpleasing task of superintending the removal of the settlers. With but few exceptions they obstinately refused to stir. The first to leave were five settlers who sailed with Foveaux to Sydney, and thence proceeded to Paterson's Settlement at Port Dalrymple, where they arrived in April, 1805. These were the first Norfolk Islanders to settle in Van Diemen's Land. Paterson wanted them to take up their locations on the Supply River on the west bank of the Tamar; but they chose their allotments on a creek two miles south-east of York Town. The soil on the hills was bad, the flats were liable to floods. Their crops turned out so poor that they threw up their locations, and Paterson eventually gave them fresh grants in the fertile country on the banks of the South Esk, somewhere in the neighbourhood of

Longford. Seven months later two more of the Norfolk Island settlers found their way to the banks of the Tamar.

With a disabled little warship and a couple of small schooners for his whole available fleet, King had to look for some chance private ship to remove stores and people from Norfolk Island. In September, 1805, the *Sydney* arrived at Port Jackson from India. As she was bound to the Derwent for oil, King agreed with Captain Forrest to touch at Norfolk Island on the way and take a cargo to Collins' settlement. For this charter he paid the captain £600. He had by this time relented of his harshness to Holt, and given him permission to leave his place of exile, so that when the *Sydney* sailed from Norfolk Island on the 1st of November, Holt took a passage in her and paid a visit to the new settlement of which he has left us a lively account in his journal. In the *Sydney* also there came the first Norfolk Island settler to the Derwent—George Guest—who brought a wife and six children and also 300 ewes, of which only 265 survived the three weeks' passage. Of 200 ewes belonging to Government, shipped at the same time, only 148 were landed. Six head of cattle arrived safely.

Thus, at the end of 1806, after the exertions of more than two years, only eight settlers with their families had been prevailed upon to remove to Van Diemen's Land. The convicts had been nearly all withdrawn, the military guard reduced to 25 men, but there were still 700 people on the island, a number nearly equal to the combined population of the two recently founded settlements in Van Diemen's Land, viz., Hobart, 471; Port Dalrymple, 301; total, 772. Lord Hobart's despatch ordering the deportation of the settlers was dated June, 1803. If it had taken more than three years to move eight settlers, how long would it take to remove 700? The Colonial Office was beginning to grow impatient, especially as news had arrived that there was once more a bad harvest at Norfolk Island.

Accordingly, in December, 1806, the Secretary of State wrote a peremptory despatch on the subject to Governor Bligh, who had succeeded King as Governor of New South Wales. In this despatch Lord Norfolk recapitulated the reasons which had led Lord Hobart more than three years before to decide on the evacuation of the island. He remarked with dissatisfaction that the measures hitherto taken had had little effect in promoting the object of freeing the Government from the expense of an unproductive settlement; that it was plain that the crops were less satisfactory each year, while the expenses were ever increasing; that Port Jackson would soon be self-supporting, while Hobart Town and Port Dalrymple appeared to have everything to recommend them in regard to

climate and fertility. It was now evident to the Government that no advantage could arise from the partial evacuation of Norfolk Island, and he therefore gave orders that measures were to be taken forthwith for the withdrawal of all settlers and stock and their removal to the new settlements in Van Diemen's Land, on the terms recommended by Foveaux nearly two years before, with certain modifications. The settlers were to be compensated for what they had to leave behind, the money compensation not to exceed £1000, and they were to have grants in the proportion of two acres only to one acre of cultivated land surrendered. On the other hand they were to have houses erected of value equal to those given up; were to be victualled for two years at the public cost; those of the better class were to be allowed the labour of four convicts for nine months and of two for fifteen months, those of less desert being allowed lesser privileges.

The deportation now began in earnest. H.M.S. *Porpoise*, the armed tender *Lady Nelson*, and the *Estramina* were to remove the people and their stock. Governor Bligh gave the settlers their choice between Port Dalrymple and the Derwent. Most of them chose the latter settlement. He then gave Collins notice to be ready to receive 120 settlers and their families, 386 souls in all, and at the same time sent him seven months' supplies.

The first vessel to arrive (28th November, 1807) was the armed tender *Lady Nelson*. She was already well known at the Derwent. In 1803 she had brought to Risdon a portion of Bowen's party, and had assisted at the founding of Hobart by Collins in February, 1804, and she now brought the first detachment of settlers deported from Norfolk Island. They consisted of 15 families, comprising 34 persons. Three months later (17th January, 1808) came the *Porpoise* with 43 families, altogether 187 persons, and on the 2nd March the *Lady Nelson* brought a further instalment of 50. Another three months saw the *Estramina* arrive with an additional 62. Thus in little more than six months Collins had had 330 people thrown on his hands with but little means to provide for their wants. Many of them were in a most wretched condition, and immediately applied to Collins for clothing and bedding which it was not in his power to give them. They had come with the expectation that all their wants would be provided for by the Government. All Collins could do was to billet the majority amongst the inhabitants. Some few he assisted to build houses for themselves. Some few he found sufficiently skilful to be employed at wages on the works he had then in hand, the principal of which was the large brick store which still stands at the bottom of Macquarie-street. Some of the new arrivals received their grants of land in the neighbourhood of the settlement at Sandy

Bay, but the greater part were fixed some 20 or 30 miles up the river, at a new settlement which, in memory of their old home, was called New Norfolk. The sudden accession of over 300 people to a small community which did not number 500 was a great strain on Collins' resources. His supplies were scanty enough, and when he learned that still more people were coming, and that he was to have thrust him upon more than double the number which Bligh had led him to expect, he was loud in his complaints both to the Home Authorities and to Sydney at the want of thought with which he had been treated.

In the meantime a little revolution had taken place in Sydney. Governor Bligh had been deposed by the officers of the New South Wales Corps, and the government had been assumed by Colonel Johnston. The work of removal from Norfolk Island was then pushed on even more rapidly. Colonel Johnston chartered the *City of Edinburgh*, a vessel of 500 tons, to remove the rest of the settlers. The deposed Bligh, in his despatches to the Secretary of State, protested strongly against the folly of crowding a host of people into a settlement so ill prepared to receive them, a proceeding which must, he foresaw, involve the whole population at the Derwent in great distress.

Already there were loud complaints from the Norfolk Islanders of the hardships they had had to endure, so different from what they had been led to expect from the representations made to them when they left the island. Many of them were in the most destitute condition, and were glad to compound their claims against the Government by taking a few live stock as compensation for the houses and effects they had left. Probably, however, their own improvident habits were their worst enemy. Foveaux states that a ship named the *Rose*, belonging to Campbells, of Sydney, had touched at the Derwent on her way from England. In direct contravention of his orders from head quarters Collins allowed the Captain to land several thousand gallons of spirit for sale. He further permitted it to be sold to the new arrivals, who parted with their little store of salted pork to the Government store to raise money to purchase the spirits. Thus, many in a few days dissipated the whole of their small means of subsistence.

The *City of Edinburgh* sailed from Sydney to remove the rest of the settlers on the 26th May, 1808; she met with a succession of heavy gales, and was repeatedly blown off the island, so that she did not complete her loading for more than three months; she sailed from the island on the 9th September, carrying 226 people to the already overcrowded settlement at the Derwent, where she arrived on the 2nd October. The unfortunate people suffered much on the long voyage of nearly

a month, and complained that they had been plundered on the way of much of their small property. The greater number were in a most destitute state—almost naked—and their arrival necessarily increased the prevailing distress at Hobart. The population of the settlement had been more than doubled by the 554 people who had come from Norfolk Island, and now stood at over 1000. Floods on the Hawkesbury in New South Wales had destroyed nearly the whole crops in March, 1808, and the Governor at Port Jackson could spare nothing in response to Collins' urgent appeals for help.

It is true that the Norfolk Islanders had brought some store of provisions, but a quite insufficient supply, and the Derwent settlement, as yet, produced practically nothing. In view of his probable necessities Collins some time before had made an agreement with Campbell, of Sydney, to bring him 500 head of Bengal cattle from India, but Lieut.-Governor Foveaux had set aside the contract as too costly, which was perhaps wise, as the shipment would have cost the English Exchequer some £20,000.

The Derwent settlement was now in great straits for food. The ration of salt meat had long since been reduced to one-half. There were only a few weeks' full rations in hand, and starvation was staring them in the face. Collins got some few stores from the rare vessels which touched at Van Diemen's Land, but this was a mere trifle. His only resource was to fall back on what the bush yielded. He therefore issued an order offering 1*s.* per lb. for all the kangaroo meat brought into store.

For the next year or two it was a struggle at Hobart Town for bare existence, and the people were on the verge of absolute starvation.

Lieut. Edward Lord, in his evidence before a Committee of the House of Commons in 1812, said that the whole settlement for a considerable time lived on kangaroo, not having a bit of other provisions. He says :—"During the great scarcity, when we lived for 13 months, except at small intervals, upon 2 lbs. of biscuit per week, we had not a single death. We were living on the wild game of the country. The people certainly suffered great inconvenience and very great privations from want of provisions. I have often myself been glad to go to bed from want of bread, and have often been without the little comforts of wine and sugar."

Kangaroo meat brought 1*s.* 6*d.* per lb. Later the *Sydney* was chartered to bring wheat from India, but she was wrecked. The *Venus*, Capt. Bunker, was then despatched. She was more fortunate, arriving in 1810 with a cargo of wheat, which at last relieved the inhabitants from their dread of famine. Wheat sank from £4, or even £6 per bushel, to 12*s.*

With respect to Norfolk Island, it was found undesirable, if not impossible, to abandon it entirely. There was still a herd of cattle and also some 3000 sheep which could not be at once removed. A small party was to be left to look after the stock and to try whether it was possible to cultivate coffee. Captain Piper reports, 30 Sept., 1808, after sailing of the *City of Edinburgh*, that there were still 250 persons on the island.

From the Report of the Parliamentary Committee above quoted it appears that in 1812 the Island was not wholly deserted. There were still a few settlers and some soldiers. A Return, dated 30 April, 1810, shows 98 free persons (of whom 61 were men) and 26 convicts, the military and officers numbering 53 ; total, 177.

The settlers from Norfolk Island were given lands at New Norfolk and Sandy Bay, at Pittwater (Sorell), and Clarence Plains in the South, and at Norfolk Plains on the Northern side of the Island. These grants were at first small, seldom exceeding 40 acres. A certain proportion of the Norfolk Islanders—especially the marines and sailors who came out with Governor Phillip in 1788, and went to the island with King, and some of the crew of the *Sirius*—who had prospered in Norfolk Island, prospered also in Van Diemen's Land, and their families have continued to hold respectable and honourable positions in this Colony. But, as a rule, the Norfolk Island settlers did not add much to the welfare and progress of the settlement at the Derwent.

The great majority, idle and improvident in their old home, did not improve by removal. They were content to draw their rations from the stores so long as that privilege was allowed them, and then bartered away their grants for a trifle, to sink out of sight in poverty and wretchedness.

AN ACCOUNT of the Settlers, Free Persons, and Prisoners received into this Settlement from Norfolk Island from 29th November, 1807, to 1 October, 1808:—

Time received.	By what Conveyance.	Settlers and Free Persons.	Women.	Children.	Prisoners (Male.)	Total Number received.
Nov. 29th, 1807	H.M. Brig *Lady Nelson*	15	6	13	...	34
Jan. 17th, 1808	H.M. Ship *Porpoise*	56	39	76	11	182
March 1st „	H.M. Brig *Lady Nelson*	25	12	11	2	50
June 7th „	H.M. Colonial schooner *Estramina*	23	13	24	2	62
Oct. 2nd „	*City of Edinburgh*	83	39	96	8	226
	Total	202	109	220	23	554

LEONARD FOSBROOK, *Deputy Commandant.*